DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 398 HE 012 395

AUTHOR Dupre, Beverly B.
TITLE University Family: Institutional Commitment to Educational Opportunities for Black Students.
PUB DATE Apr 79
NOTE 13p.: Paper submitted to the American Council on Education for the Fellows Program in Academic Administration

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education: Administrative Policy: *Black Students: *Black Teachers: *College Desegregation: College Environment: Desegregation Plans: *Equal Education: Federal Aid: Higher Education: Leadership: Minority Groups: Private Colleges: *Racial Integration: Student Needs: Student Recruitment: Teacher Recruitment
IDENTIFIERS Advanced Institutional Development Program: *Loyola University LA

ABSTRACT

Efforts of Loyola University in New Orleans to recruit and retain minority students since the early 1970's are reported. A task force was assigned to study the university's role in providing opportunities to blacks, in terms of course offerings, student recruiting strategies, faculty recruiting policies, and other issues. A grant of $1.8 million was received from the Advanced Institutional Development Program for further efforts. Task force subcommittees were created to address hiring practices, development and public relations, student affairs, and academic affairs. A black president from a neighboring university was brought in as a consultant. Questionnaires were distributed to units within the university to gather information on current practices and needed changes. The task force concluded that: (1) special efforts needed to be made to make the entire university community aware of black student needs: (2) overt racism did not exist, but misunderstanding and/or lack of sensitivity did exist: and (3) practical measures for remediation were to be initiated. The latter task was assigned to members of an administrative council. The work of the task force was felt to be both a consciousness-raising experience and a successful effort at open administration. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED184398

UNIVERSITY FAMILY: INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLACK STUDENTS

Paper Submitted

to the

American Council on Education

as part of the

Requirements For The

Fellows Program in Academic Administration

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Beverly B. Dupre'

April 1979

Loyola University
New Orleans, Louisiana

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Beverly B Dupre'

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

HE 012 395

UNIVERSITY FAMILY: INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT
TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLACK STUDENTS

Beverly B. Dupre', Ph.D.

American Council on Education Fellow

April 1979

UNIVERSITY FAMILY: Institutional Commitment to Educational Opportunities for Black Students

The last decade might be characterized as the age of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Even though mandates regarding affirmative action have in many cases precipitated and intensified these matters, the desire for incorporating minorities into the mainstream of predominantly white institutions has been of concern on many campuses. This concern is based upon the premise that college is intended to give each person the chance to work out his unique destiny in a setting that raises aspirations, that permits exploration and experimentation, that provides encouragement and support, and that offers the chance to learn in both the cognitive and affective spheres [1].

With the increased desire of many institutions to attract minorities to their respective campuses, difficulties associated with implementation created new considerations. Some of these considerations included recruitment, retention, campus involvement, role models, cultural understanding, faculty and peer acceptance.

It can be hypothesized that federal government regulations had the power to mandate the admission of minorities to university campuses, but that the affective domain of campus life could not be mandated. The extent to which minorities would be incorporated into the mainstream of campus life would have to be developed through a program of concern and desire. In addition, the campus atmosphere would have to reflect the leadership afforded in the area of human concern.

"Good faith" activities, as a means of incorporating minorities into the campus mainstream, would have to call upon all components of the university. Acceptance would be reflected in academic, financial, student life and development areas. Human attitudes regarding the acceptance of minorities in relation to the delivery of services would have to be deliberated as a means of avoiding apathy. Attempts on the part of minorities to resist isolation and remoteness would also be of concern.

What follows is a report of a recent case study of an institution that cared. Concern for creating an environment of family concern as a means of accepting minorities without altering scholarly endeavors of the campus was the challenge undertaken.

The College

Loyola University is a medium sized private institution, located in a large urban community. Historically, the university was populated by a predominantly white constituency. During the late 60's and 70's concerted effort was extended to attract minorities to the campus. At best, efforts provided for the enrollment of a small percentage of minorities. The university enrolled an average of 95% non minority and 5% minority students. The addition of a few minority faculty members was implemented. In spite of "good faith activities", and concern on the part of the leadership, efforts to mainstream and maintain the maximum interest of minorities, and to alter behavior of the campus life, proved worthy of further consideration.

Loyola was cognizant of the data that stated that a higher number of blacks received degrees in private colleges than in public colleges [6]. The one to one relationship in student services was viewed as the reason for this success. Loyola was desirous of offering a one to one relationship to its students, but the services appeared not to be reaching the black students.

Development of a Commitment to Black Students

In the early '70's Loyola University recognized that it should assume responsibilities to the community. As such, goals were formulated for her role in the community during the 1970's. It was felt that the institution should make a serious effort to probe and uncover the latent unity of the community people, black and white, so that together they could build a richer future for their children. As such, conscious efforts were considered in order to prepare the educationally underprivileged for college life, and to make a college education available to them. In addition the institution saw the need for commitment within the limit of available resources, to encourage and support such programs and institutes as well as help to be of maximum service to the community.

As the 1970's progressed, a total of approximately ten percent of the students enrolled at the university were black. The community in which the university is located has a population of approximately fifty percent black.

The Plan

As a means of being true to its mission, the university felt the need to make every effort to be sensitive to the needs of its black students, and to respond to these needs with positive action.

During the mid 1970's at the opening faculty convocation, the President of Loyola University led a discussion on the role of the Black Student at the institution. The discussion involved students, faculty members, and administrators. It was generally agreed that the convocation was a worthwhile discussion on an important topic, but much more remained to be said and many things needed to be done. Shortly afterwards, the President called for volunteers from throughout the university to serve on a task force to study the role and the special needs of the black students.

A short time afterward, the task force held its first meeting. At that meeting the President spoke of the importance of the assignment and said that the task force was to develop its own mandate, subject only to his approval. The fifteen persons present at the meeting elected the vice president for academic affairs to be chairman and elected a faculty colleague as staff secretary. Of the 15 persons, 11 were non black and 4 were black.

The goal of the task force was to conduct a self study of the university's role in providing increased opportunities for black students. Activities to be conducted in the fulfillment of the goal included an investigation of a) course offerings, b) student recruiting strategies, c) faculty staff recruiting policies, and d) other questions related to educational opportunities for black students.

The charge of the task force would provide the opportunity to put the full weight of the university's faculty and staff behind their good intentions. It was consensus of opinion that good will did exist among the university's faculty and staff.

The first action taken by the task force was the appointment of a subcommittee to review a major federal proposal (Advanced Institutional Development Program (AIDP). The purpose of the review was to ascertain if minor rewriting of the proposal would make it possible to achieve goals that would better serve the needs of minority, especially black, students at Loyola. A five member subcommittee worked closely with the Director of Development, and was able to achieve certain

revisions in time for the submission deadline. The effort proved to be worthwhile when the university was notified at a later date that it was the recipient of the grant (in the amount of $1.8 million).

The task force was later to serve an important role in screening candidates for the position of coordinator of the grant.

Membership on the task force remained relatively stable throughout the year of its operation. There were fifteen members present at the first task force meeting. Of that group, all but two remained active. Several others joined the task force later. The members spent a significant portion of their time in the task force work because they were concerned about the issue of improving the opportunities for black students on the campus. The task force met regularly every two weeks throughout the academic year and through the summer as well. In addition, there were many subcommittee meetings that involved more hours on the part of members.

The contribution of the task force members was paralleled by the cooperation received throughout the university in gathering basic data and materials. Questionnaires designed by the task force were such that their completion required time and effort on the part of many faculty members and administrative offices. The cooperation received was uniformly high and all segments of the university provided assistance and cooperation in assisting the task force to complete the assignments within its allotted year.

Implementation

Within two weeks following the President's challenge, the initial meeting of the task force was held. Introductory remarks by the President addressed the purpose of the committee. Namely, it was acknowledged that campus services were available to blacks, but that the black student apparently was unaware of them. The undergirding causes of this would be determined through the committee activities. The need for total education of the students was emphasized.

During the organizational meetings that followed, the chairman suggested that the task force prepare specific questions to be addressed to various parts of the university. In addition it was suggested that groups be formulated to prepare the questions. Task force members were divided into committees for the purpose of preparing questions with regard to a) hiring practices throughout the university, b) Development and Public Relations, c) Student Affairs, and d) Academic Affairs.

The black president from a neighboring university was invited to serve in a consultative role to the task force. The consultant supported the need for the task force's work but expressed objection to the need for appointing a Minority Student Advisor to service only black students. This objection was based upon the premise that black students, in selecting a predominantly white institution for their education, were not desirous of being restricted to a black person to serve as their advisor.

The chairman suggested that members of the task force give consideration to questions that constituted the perceived needs of the campus and subcommittees were assigned.

Following meetings were devoted to reviewing questions which were formulated by the respective subcommittees. Discussion initiated the formulation of additional questions and further areas of inquiry. The need to design university questionnaires for distribution to the various university components was viewed as the next responsibility.

Sample copies of questionnaires were reviewed and a decision was made to distribute copies to the departmental chairpersons, deans, to program directors and line offices. Interviews with persons identified by committee members in order to obtain additional information were determined.

Questionnaire revisions were made. Prior to distribution the revised forms were submitted to the President of Loyola for his approval.

Continued meetings focused on periodic reviews of literature related to the task were scheduled. Discussion centered around current articles pertaining to the ethnic backgrounds of professionals, and procedures for evaluating an institution's commitment to minorities [3,4].

The committee which originally was comprised of thirteen faculty members and two students was increased to include two additional black students.

In addition, the committee conferred with resource persons and consultants. The results of a campus survey conducted by a faculty member of the Counseling and Career Development Center provided input to the committee's deliberations [2]. One consultant guided the committee through illustrations cited in professional literature as a means of providing indepth information and stimulating thought provoking questions. Means of assessing qualitative data was also discussed [5].

Analysis of Information Received

As questionnaires were returned to the committee members, the need for establishing guidelines for reviewing the questionnaires was determined as being necessary. It was decided that the questions themselves would act as the model for the review process. In addition, the answers would be analyzed and categorized in an attempt to find a general consensus. The answers could then be summarized into an overview.

The committee was then divided into subcommittees for the purpose of reviewing the questionnaires. The subcommittees were: 1) Departmental Questionnaires, 2) Deans and Personnel Office, and 3) Student Affairs. The subcommittees were to prepare summary reports within the period of a month.

During the following month, subcommittee reports were presented to the task force. Members were requested to read the responses which would be routed to them. Results of the questionnaire suggested areas of strength and areas which appeared to be in need of attention. Recommendations to administrators, reponsible for university components assessed, were formulated. It was determined that in many decision making areas on campus, representation by black participants was needed.

Some information received on questionnaires focused on the need to bring black speakers to the campus in order to provide a black perspective for students. Deficiencies among black students in the academic skills, and perceived lack of self-confidence were also suggested from the questionnaires.

All recommendations formulated by the subcommittees as a result of the university units surveyed were reviewed by members of the task force. The task force discussed each recommendation and agreed upon the final formulation of recommendations.

Task Force Recommendations

As a result of the task force activities, final recommendations accompanied by descriptive rationale narration were submitted to the President. Areas in which recommendations were made were 1) Admissions, 2) Financial Aid, 3) Intramurals, 4) Food Service, 5) Counseling, 6) Personnel, 7) Guest Lecturers, 8) Deans and Departments, 9) Health, 10) Student Government Association, 11) Student Union and 12) Housing.

The task force concluded that a need existed for a university-wide effort to make all members of the Loyola community aware of the special needs of the minority student. This included the black student, the foreign student, and the white student from a poor or culturally deprived background. However, even though the report was restricted to the needs of black students, it was noted that the problem was more extensive than just black students, and the recommendations were to be taken in their widest application.

It was general consensus of the membership based upon an investigation into every aspect of the university's operation and into every faculty and administrative office, that overt racism did not exist within the institution. The task force did uncover what it considered to be a lack of understanding, awareness, and/or sensitivity on the part of some individuals and certain offices, regarding the particular needs of black students. This discovery was not thought to be exceptional or unusual, and the report was not intended to be a criticism of the university by the task force. Rather, the task force wished that the criticism be taken as a call to action on the part of all concerned, also that the university family would accept the challenge to overcome the lingering vestiges of prejudice that should not exist at the institution.

The task force did not wish to exclude itself from the general criticism. Each of the white members of the task force found his or her work to be an educational and beneficial experience in gaining an increasing awareness of the significance and magnitude of the problem.

The task force was aware throughout its investigation of the twin dangers of sweeping certain matters "under the rug", or of entering upon a witch hunt in the search for culprits. The task force tried to walk the path between the two dangers, and decided that the committee was not the body to judge the degree of success or failure. This was thought to be the responsibility of others.

The task force was aware of the danger that some of the recommendations could be interpreted as personal reprimands, or as an uncalled for step of singling out a particular office for criticism. The task force did not see itself as a vehicle for either reprimand or criticism, but rather as having the assignment of calling the attention of persons of good will to possible ways of improving life on the campus. It was the hope of the task force that the recommendations would be taken as they were intended: suggestions - hopefully well-founded - that would advance the primary role of the university in providing education for all students as well as for improving the delivery of services by administrative offices to faculty and students alike.

Assignment of Task Force Recommendations

Discussions regarding the work of the task force were viewed by faculty, staff and administrators as being a meaningful and monumental task. Acceptance of the recommendations for institutional change was viewed as a desired objective.

Responsibilities for the implementation of the task force recommendations were divided by the President among members of the Administrative Council. It was felt that effort to increase understanding regarding the depth of the problem should be carefully undertaken. Leadership would be sought from those areas of the university such as the departments of Psychology, Sociology and the Counseling Center, in planning for sensitivity experiences.

Practical measures for remediation in areas identified were to be initiated by the respective member of the Administrative Council.

It was of general consensus that paternalism was not to be substituted for indifference. In contrast, it was viewed that a long range and enlightened program would serve to advance significantly the goal of racial harmony on the campus.

Conclusion

The work of the task force on Educational Opportunities for Black Students was a successful activity. Due to the high spirit of cooperation that was received from faculty members and administrators, the task force was able to complete its assignment within the allotted year.

The basic nature of the work conducted by the task force served the purpose of raising the consciousness level of the university regarding the need for providing additional opportunities for minorities. A byproduct of the task force activity was the fact that steps for remediation were instilled before a formal initiation would begin.

What can we learn from the Loyola University experience? If the situation at Loyola is generic to other institutions, it would appear that administrative leadership combined with the desire on the part of a committed faculty and staff, would produce a catalytic effect. Also of significance is the philosophy of an open administration. When administration identifies problem areas, and presents them to the university family in a spirit of support and confidence, but lacking innuendoes of suspicion, the dedication of those persons who serve is renewed. Only then can the goals and mission of an institution be fulfilled.

References

1. Bowen, H.R. "Systems Theory Excellence, and Values: Will They Mix?" Washington, D.C.: National Association of College and University Business Officers, 1977.

2. Miller, R.J. "Black Student Attitudes Towards Student Affairs Services." New Orleans, La.: Loyola University, 1975.

3. _____ "Professors' Religious and Ethnic Backgrounds." Washington, D.C.: Chronicle of Higher Education, 1975, Vol. XI, No. 2, p.2. 1975 Ladd-Lipset Survey of U.S. Faculty Members by Ladd, Everett Carll, Seymour, Martin Lipset.

4. Roueche, J. E. and Kirk, R. W. Catching Up: Remedial Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973.

5. _____ "Self Report Inventory." Austin, Tx.: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, University of Texas, 1959-67.

6. _____ "Students Enrolled in Institutions of Higher Education." Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana Coordinating Council of Higher Education, 1975.